



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO  
STANDARD PRACTICE

NO 2-1.30

Revised issue 10/99

Page 1 of 2

BY Rhett Rehage

Effective 6/94

APPROVED

DEPARTMENT

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

SUBJECT

MASS MEDIA RELEASE POLICY

*Rudy Lopez*  
Rudy Lopez, Director

## I. PURPOSE

To establish a policy for the initiation, coordination and approval of media releases (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.) within the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH).

## II. POLICY

The media largely influences the public's perception of behavioral health and substance abuse issues. Therefore, it is important for the department to present itself in a positive manner and exercise control over how these issues are portrayed by the media. The department conscientiously pursues proactive communications with the media as part of its overall community outreach and public information program. In order for Community Outreach Services (COS) to create a consistent departmental message, all media releases should be coordinated through COS whenever possible. COS will maintain a listing of media sources and contacts to ensure wide spread dissemination of all approved information releases.

## III. MEDIA INITIATED REQUESTS

- A. Procedure. When initial contact is made by the media to obtain information on a particular newsworthy item, the staff member contacted by the media must immediately inform the Deputy Director, via the Program Manager if appropriate.
1. The department's goal is to respond to the request in a timely manner with accurate information to allow the reporter to meet his or her deadline.
  2. If time permits, contact COS staff for assistance in determining the appropriate level and type of response.
- B. Approval. The appropriate Deputy Director is the approval authority for responding to media requests.
1. The Assistant Director or Director will have final approval authority to release information in controversial situations.

## IV. INTERNALLY INITIATED MEDIA RELEASES

- A. Procedure. Requests for the release of information to the media can be initiated at or above the level of Clinic Supervisor.
1. Requests for release of information to the media initiated from a Clinical Supervisor or Program Manager is to be coordinated with the Deputy Director to ensure the message is consistent with DBH interests.

- a. COS is available to assist Program Managers and Clinic Supervisors in drafting the media release.
  - b. The Deputy Director will determine if the release should be reviewed by the Assistant Director or Director.
2. Forward approved media releases to COS, which has the responsibility for wide spread dissemination throughout the media.
- B. Format. Releases will be printed on DBH letterhead. Identify either the initiating program/clinic or COS as the source/point of contact. Use the attached sample news release as an example.
- C, Approval. The appropriate Deputy Director, as a minimum, must approve all media releases.
  1. In the case of controversial issues the Assistant Director or Director will have final approval authority prior to release.
  2. Coordinate the release through COS whenever possible. If prior coordination is not possible, forward an informational copy of the release to COS.
- D. Distribution. COS will be the responsible department for all media releases requiring wide spread distribution.
- E. Tracking. The initiating Program Manager/Clinic Supervisor is responsible for maintaining a copy of the release, obtaining the appropriate approval and forwarding the release to COS for distribution to the media.
  1. COS will maintain a listing of all media sources that were sent a copy of the release.
  2. When listed as the point of contact, COS will respond to media inquiries pertaining to the release.

**V. COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES SECTION.**

- A. The Community Outreach Services (COS) section will provide consultation in the development of media releases, provide necessary training on working with the media and develop media releases of general nature for DBH.
- B. COS will maintain and update an annual list of media outlets and mailing labels.

**NEWS RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Community Outreach Services**  
**(909)421-9340 FAX: (909)421-9343**

**December 16, 1998**

**FEELING STRESSED AS A RESULT OF THE EARTHQUAKE?**

Inland Empire residents who were "shaken up" emotionally by Wednesday's 4.8 earthquake near Lake Arrowhead are not alone – it's not unusual to have a number of stress-related reactions afterward, according to a counselor at the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health.

"It is important to be aware that our reactions are not unusual," said Ana Montes of the Child and Adolescent Treatment Services (CATS) counseling center in San Bernardino. She spent a year counseling victims of the Landers/Big Bear earthquakes.

"Generally, these feelings and responses do not last long," Montes said. "However, identifying and dealing with emotional needs now can help to prevent problems in the future."

While there was little if any property damage from this most recent tremor, it is not unusual for those who did suffer damage in the Landers or Big Bear earthquakes of 1992 – or anyone else – to relive some of the following experiences, memories and feelings.

Some common responses are:

- Irritability/Anger
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to sleep
- Nightmares
- Sadness
- Headaches or nausea
- Hyperactivity
- Lack of concentration
- Increase in alcohol or drug consumption

**more**

**Quake Reactions/Page 2**

“Acknowledging feelings and stress is the first step in feeling better,” Montes said.

Suggestions to help recover include:

- Talk about your disaster experiences. Sharing your feelings rather than holding them in will help you feel better about what happened.
- Take time off from cares, worries and home repairs. Take time for recreation, relaxation or a favorite hobby. Getting away from home for a day or a few hours with close friends can help.
- Pay attention to your health, to good diet and adequate sleep. Relaxation exercises may help if you have difficulty sleeping.
- Prepare for possible future emergencies to lessen feelings of helplessness and bring peace of mind. Prepare your home and office by putting together a disaster emergency kit.
- Rebuild personal relationships in addition to repairing other aspects of your life. Couples should make time to be alone together, both to talk and to have fun.

If stress, anxiety, depression or physical problems continue, contact the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health at 1-888-743-1478. TDD 1-888-743-1481.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CONTACT: Community Outreach Services  
(909)421-9340 FAX: (909)421-9343**

**December 16, 1998**

**1996 SOBER GRADUATION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Hey, class of '96, congratulations! It's party time! But remember that drinking and driving don't mix. Make this a sober graduation and make it to your future. A message from KCAL-FM and the San Bernardino County Office of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

Graduation time is almost here. Soon it will be time to celebrate, but drinking and driving can turn a dream into a nightmare. Don't let all your hard work go down the drain – make it to your future. Make this graduation a sober graduation. A public service message from KCAL-FM and the San Bernardino County Office of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

Congratulations, class of '96 – you made it! Now it's time to party, right? Don't let drinking and driving mess up a good thing. Make this a sober graduation and make it to your future. A public service message from KCAL-FM and the San Bernardino County Office of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

Graduation should be a time to remember, not a time to regret. Don't let drinking and driving turn a joyful celebration into a tragedy. Have a sober graduation and make it to your future. A public service message from KCAL-FM and the San Bernardino County Office of Alcohol and Drug Programs.